

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 CANBER 04417 080556Z

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ACTION SS-25

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P 080535Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6100

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 4417

EXDIS

DEPT PASS DOD, CINCPAC AND CNO

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: AS, OVIP, PFOR, MARR

SUBJ: VISIT OF DEFENSE MINISTER MORRISON TO U.S.

REF: CINCPACREP CANBERRA 070813Z JUL 75

(BEING REPEATED TO DEPT)

1. AUSTRALIAN DEFENSE MINISTER WILLIAM L. MORRISON PLANS TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES JULY 29 THROUGH AUGUST 6 AND PLANS TO BE IN WASHINGTON APPROXIMATELY AUGUST 4 AND 5. THE DEFENSE MINISTER WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY PERMANENT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, SIR ARTHUR TANGE, AND ADMIRAL SIR VICTOR SMITH, CHAIRMAN OF THE AUSTRALIAN CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEE. WE BELIEVE THAT MRS. MORRISON, A FORMER US CITIZEN WITH RELATIVES IN THE PASADENA AREA, WILL BE IN THE U.S. DURING AT LEAST PART OF THE DEFENSE MINISTER'S VISIT.

2. I BELIEVE THAT A SUBSTANTIAL PROGRAM SHOULD BE ARRANGED FOR MORRISON AND HIS GROUP. CALLS ON SEC. DEF. AND DEP. SEC. DEF. AND DISCUSSION OF MUTUAL DEFENSE PROBLEMS WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL IN BRIEFING HIM ON SOME OF OUR CONCERNS. MORRISON, AS MINISTER ASSISTING THE MINISTER FOR DEFENSE, WAS BRIEFED ON JOINT DEFENSE FACILITIES IN JULY, 1974, AND IS AWARE OF POSITIVE ATTITUDE WHICH PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM HAS RE-
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CENTLY EXPRESSED REGARDING THEM.

3. IT IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT THAT MORRISON BE GIVEN HIGH LEVEL TREATMENT AS HE IS A TOUCH INDIVIDUAL. HE TOLD ME PRIVATELY AT THE JULY 4 RECEPTION THAT IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE IF ANYONE IN WASHINGTON SHOULD DOWNGRADE THE IMPORTANCE OF HIS VISIT ON THE GROUNDS THAT THIS LABOR GOVERNMENT IS SHORTLIVED. WHILE CONCEDED THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S DAYS ARE PROBABLY NUMBERED, MORRISON SAID THE LIBERAL-COUNTRY PARTY OPPOSITION WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO HOLD ON TO GOVERNMENT VERY LONG AND THAT WHEN LABOR RETURNED TO POWER HE WOULD BE A MAIN FIGURE IN THE NEW LABOR GOVERNMENT. IT IS PROBABLY TRUE THAT REGULAR ALTERATIONS OF POWER AT RELATIVELY SHORT INTERVALS BETWEEN THE LABOR PARTY ON ONE HAND AND LIBERAL-COUNTRY PARTIES ON THE OTHER HAND WILL BE THE POLITICAL PATTERN IN THE FUTURE IN AUSTRALIA. MORRISON MAY WELL BE A SIGNIFICANT FIGURE OVER THE LONG TERM. AGE 46 AT PRESENT, HE HAS SERVED IN PARLIAMENT SINCE 1969.

4. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, IT IS IMPORTANT DURING THIS PERIOD WHEN THE LABOR GOVERNMENT'S SHORT-TERM PROSPECTS LOOK INCREASINGLY DISMAL THAT WE RETAIN CORDIAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH THOSE LABOR FIGURES LIKE MORRISON WHO MAY WELL BE IMPORTANT FIGURES IN THE NEXT GOVERNMENT BUT ONE.
GREEN

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED DOD, CINCPAC AND CNO.

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